64: Urbanowicz E-4,5 (1970,1971) 1976 OU9 Tonga OU9

Order; Knight Commander of (the order of) the British Empire; and Commander of (the order of) the British Empire].

Although much has been written about *kava* ceremonies in Tonga (Pratt 1922; Collocott 1927; Gifford 1929; Beaglehole and Beaglehole 1941; Newell 1947; Lemert 1967; Bott 1972 and Leach 1972) no authors have satisfactorily dealt with the basic question raised by Lemert when he criticized the work of the Beagleholes: no one has explained "why drinking *kava* rather than other beverages continues to function as an integrating force in Tongan life" (1967:190). Lemert pointed out that this is an extremely important question since "home brew" has been available for some time as one "alternative of male interaction." One must also add that there are numerous commercial establishments in Tonga which provide alcoholic beverages which could, theoretically at least, serve as substitutes for *kava* drinking.

Why the persistence of *kava* drinking over the years, both informal consumption (loosely structured) and formal ceremonial consumption (highly structured drinking patterns)? To deal with this question one must combine contemporary ethnographic evidence with accurate ethnohistorical evidence to obtain a diachronic and plausible interpretation. The major point presented in this paper is that *kava* drinking has been the way in which Tongans have maintained their identity. The most important *kava* ceremony in Tonga, the *Taumafa kava* (or monarch's *kava*) continues to provide the major focal point for Tongan unity.[1]

Drinking in Tonga

To place the *Taumafa kava* ceremony into perspective, background information on the drinking of *kava* and alcoholic beverages is in order. With the prerequisite alcohol license, individual Tongans (and non-Tongans residing in Tonga) may purchase alcoholic beverages for consumption off of the premises from major stores in Tonga. The alcoholic beverages may also be partaken of in at least three main "clubs" on Tongatapu. The three clubs on Tongatapu present an intriguing structural pattern of drinking behavior. At one end of a continuum one has the "Tonga Club" which is frequented primarily by Tongan males and only secondarily by some Europeans (males and females). At the other end of a continuum one has the prestigious and exclusive all-male "Nuku'alofa Club" (the second oldest private club in the South Pacific, founded on May 15, 1914). The Nuku'alofa Club is frequented by resident Tongans and non-Tongans and various transient males. One night a year this club is open to members' wives for a dance. The third club has a mediating position on the continuum and is the "Nuku'alofa Yacht and Motor Boat Club." This club is frequented by both Tongans and non-Tongans, males

64: Urbanowicz E-4,5 (1970,1971) 1976 OU9 Tonga OU9

and females, and may be called the family club in Tonga. Men and women drink side by side, frequent dances and activities are held, and movies are shown for children on some Saturdays and afternoons. No *kava* is served in any of these clubs and the standard fare is "Fiji Beer" or "Steinlager," scotch and water, gin and tonic, or rum and coke. Alcoholic beverages can also be purchased for approximately triple the club prices from the various hotels in the Kingdom.

An intriguing aspect of the Nuku'alofa Yacht and Motor Boat Club was the presence, on numerous occasions, of several Tongans who belonged to Churches whose members were (theoretically) supposed to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages. Once they entered the club, however, the rules were changed and they "shouted" drinks with the best of them! When questioned about this seeming inconsistency in their religious beliefs, some Tongans stated that the club was "neutral" territory. This would appear to happen in more than one club as an article pointed out about a political campaign where "just about everything was tried."

> [The Tongan candidate for the Legislative Assembly] approached fellow church-goers in the . . . community but at the same time sported whiskies and Steinlagers at Nuku'alofa bars (Anonymous 1969).[2]

There are numerous *kava* bars throughout the islands of Tonga. In the various *kava* bars, individuals may purchase small coconut shell cups of *kava* which cost a few cents. Just as *kava-palangi* or alcoholic beverages may be purchased in the large stores, *kava Tonga* or small bundles of the root of the *Piper methysticum* may be purchased from the small shops (*fale koloa*, literally "house of riches" or "house of treasure") which are in every village and in Nuku'alofa.

Significance of Kava Drinking

Lemert has written that "Tongans distinguish three types of *kava* drinking" namely [1] *fai-kava*, or the *kava* drinking of the common people; [2] the *'ilo kava*, the honorific term applied to the kava drinking of the *'eiki* (high ranking individuals); and [3] the *Taumafa kava*, or the monarch's (or Royal) *kava* ceremony (1967:188). This threefold distinction is too fine and I am in agreement with His Royal Highness Tu'i Pelehake, the Premier of Tonga and His Majesty's brother, who has pointed out that "there are two types of *kava* ceremonies, the ordinary *kava* ceremony and the King's *Kava* Ceremony (*Taumafa kava*)" (1955:48). The ceremony known as *'ilo kava* should be seen as a mediating ceremony between the *fai kava* (informal) and *Taumafa kava* (highly formal) ceremonies. For all essential purposes there are only two types of *kava* ceremonies in Tonga: those in which the reigning ruler

64: Urbanowicz E-4,5 (1970,1971) 1976 OU9 Tonga OU9

this will be an indication that the basic fabric of their culture and society has shifted.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of a paper presented at the Third Annual Meeting of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (March 13-17, 1974) for a Symposium on "Alcohol and Kava Use in the Pacific Islands." Research was conducted in Tonga from July to October of 1970 and from August to October of 1971. In the intervening months archival research was conducted in the major libraries of Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia, with most of the research being done in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia.
2. There is at least one other alcohol-dispensing club in the Kingdom, namely the "Vava'u Club" in Vava'u. Since my work in Tonga a new hotel has opened in Vava'u, and alcohol prices probably follow the prices of the hotels on Tongatapu. It should be pointed out that in 1970 and 1971 the various clubs and hotels were selling beverages in obvious violation of Tonga's "Blue Laws" which (theoretically) forbid essentially all non-religious business activities on Sundays.
3. For further information on rank and title see Urbanowicz 1973:114.
4. Tongans not only presented *kava* roots to important individuals but also took *kava* roots on visits to important places. The Wesleyan Missionary W. Cross, in the islands from 1827 to 1833 and again from 1834 to 1835, pointed this out: "The [Tongan] Chief observed that on former occasions when they visited and [*sic.*] island it was their custom to take large pieces of *kava* for the gods; and that to Nomuka alone they used to take at least 10 pieces" (Cross 1830b).
5. A similar detailed description from Hobbs supports the idea of title removal and land distribution at a kava ceremony: "A 'fai Kava' i.e. meeting for drinking Kava took place at Nuku'alofa on Tuesday the 18th at which [Josaia] Tubou presided of course as the Tui-kanokubólu, Taufa-ahou [also known as King George Tupou] and all the other principal persons were there, and word was sent to Lavaka at the Bea to come and attend before our people and Taufa-ahou left the Island, but Lavaka [still] refused. The ceremony therefore proceeded without Lavaka. THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF THE KAVA MEETING WAS TO STATE OFFICIALLY FROM THE TUI-KANOKUBOLU WHO WAS THE[N] [TO] OCCUPY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE DIFFERENT DISTRICTS IN TONGA since the rebellion; and the principal things affected by this appointment are as follows: Old Fatu who was the 1st heathen [or non-Wesleyan] chief who submitted, and who had now come to Nukualofa to the Tui-kanokubolu has got a considerable augmentation of his power in being appointed Tui-Hahake. OLD LAVAKA IS OFFICIALLY DEPRIVED OF ALL HIS POWER BY THE APPOINTMENT OF OLD SEMI AND FOKE as Tuihaamea, because the fortress at the Bea stands in Haamea" [all STRESS added] (Hobbs *Journal*: April 22, 1837).
6. I witnessed a *Taumata kava* ceremony on the island of 'Eua over the period 14 September to 17 September, 1971, having travelled to the island with the royal part on *H.M.T. Kao*. Enroute to 'Eua from the island of Tongatapu, a journey of some four hours, I was fortunate to have approximately a three hour and forty-five minute private discussion with His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV (on just about everything under the Tongan sun, including *kava*). Much of my thinking about *kava* has been influenced by my discussions with His Majesty AS WELL AS by numerous discussions with other Tongans, of all ranks. I also took part in numerous kava ceremonies in Tonga occasionally where I was treated as the guest of honor.
7. The *'inasi* ceremony was not only an important ceremony in aboriginal Tongan society but it also had parallels in other parts of Polynesia (Goldman 1970:134; and Sahlins 1958:24-25). The Tongans were a horticultural people and indeed, today, agriculture along with "tourism" are the mainstays of the Tongan economy. The yam

/241 cont./

472 grandfather, also started a trucking service on Lifuka with a truck that he bought secondhand for 300£T. He makes trips day after day,
(434) at any time, and earns more than 100£T a month. During the free time left to him he works on his new European frame house (with corrugated metal roof). Its furnishings consist of a table, a small bench, a chair, a plank bed, a few mats and a number of oil cans, as well as parts for his car. He also owns a large radio that he had sent from Australia for 55£T. St., who impresses one as being restless, nervous
(157) and driven, and who is apparently overworked, says that he is trying to earn lots of money in order to give his children a good education (perhaps in Australia or New Zealand).

472 The Tongan V.F. (in Pangai, Lifuka) works his plantation, but
295 has in addition discovered a unique possibility of making money: he buys lemon extract and sugar at the shopkeeper's, his wife makes drinks from these and he sells them soda fountain style to his countrymen. To do this he sets himself up in the shed of the Copra Board in Pangai where there is a great deal of traffic and where the air is hot
(435) and dry. He charges sixpence for a glass of lemonade. On "good" days,
(434) that is, when it is particularly hot, he earns 5 to 8£T. V.F. well remembers his "best" day, December 31, 1951, on which he took in 13£T. With the money he defrays all special expenses of his family. Yet he
(454) lives in a simple house of ancient Tongan style and is saving a great deal of money because he wants to assure his sons of a "good future" (education).

472 To this category of people engaged in trade (that is, people carrying on independent activities purely for economic gain) belong especially the storekeepers (who procure goods in the chief towns and sell them on the islands); likewise to be classed in this category are individual Tongans and cooperatives that own sailboats and make